HISTORY OF BUSY LIFE

Senator Stewart Writes His Reminiscences.

BOOK HAS LITERARY MERIT

Member of Upper House for Twenty-nine Years, and a Friend of Lincoln, the Aged Statesman Had Many Opportunities to Gather Data for Such a Work as Is Now Issued.

A volume that has just been published, "The Reminiscences of Senator William M. Stewart, of Nevada," is likely to attract a much wider popularity than the merits of the work as a literary performance may warrant. Not that the book has not great literary merits, for it has; it has the merit of simplicity, which is much sought after these days by men of letters, and which has been achieved in this book largely because its author has had to tell a plain tale, the force of its truth needing no embellishment.

Here is a man at eighty-three vigorous, of clear and alert mind—a man who has seen many things, known many men, who has deliberately set down the story of his life. It is, of course—for it cannot help but be—a picture of the history of the country during that period, and this intensely human document, besides the great interest it has as a "plain, unvarnished tale," will probably prove of great value to the historian of the future.

For Senator Stewart's life has been one of unusual action and adventure. It has been filled with color and dash and energy, and his mind carries him back to the early schoolhouse and to the first money he earned cradling wheat, through a career as frontiersman, neighbor to the Indian, friend of ranchmen, miners, judges, statesmen. In the building of a great Western State he has had no inconsiderable share. He has made laws and enforced them; he has made and lost fortunes; he made a fee of half a million dollars in the famous Comstock litigation; he declined a place on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States; he sat in the Senate of the United States for twenty-nine years; was a friend of Abraham Lincoln, and it was to him that President Lincoln addressed the last note he was ever to write on this earth.

Many Facts to Relate.

If a newspaper were to set out to interview this man, the reporter would be confronted with an embarrassment of riches, for here is a man who has lived big things and whose adventures are as fascinating as any novel. And he himself has set it all down here from his career as a poor farm boy up to a seat in the great war Senate. Here you may follow him from the farm to shipboard, making his way to the Californian Eldorado where, with a broken shovel and a stub of a pick, he hewed out the beginnings of his first fortune, which, when made, was to be lost in a single night.

This is American romance, for it is a true picture of American life and American possibilities. In no other country in the world would such a life as this be possible.

An introduction to the book has been written by Mr. George Rothwell Brown, who in one place writes:

The years spent in the Golden West were golden years, indeed. Many years after his arrival in the promised land—years during which he carried his life in his hands with reckless abandon; years during which he fought Indians, battled with bandits, organized and enforced rude frontier justice, playing a man's part in a man's life—many years after he had planted his pick in Grizzly Ditch, Mark Twain and Bret Harte, called "pioneers," appeared upon the scene and wrote the stories this blue-eyed, iron-fisted, fearless giant helped create. I seem to see him now, with a derringer in each hand, cowing the bully of the camp, a man who had sixteen notches in the handle of his gun and was generally reputed to be a stranger to fear. Many another man since then, including one who had been a President of the United States, have quailed under the lightning flash from Stewart's eye. It is a mild blue eye when he is at peace with the world, an eye that makes children smile, and lift up their arms to him; but when his shaggy brows are in a frown—well, the slayer of those sixteen men laughed away the pistols with a jest and said: "I like your kind; have a drink."

His Retirement Well Earned.

It is not necessary to recapitulate here the facts of Senator Stewart's birth and to follow him step by step to his well-earned retirement of to-day, but one may with propriety pick out certain of the incidents he has related so well. Here, for instance, is a picture of election methods of half a century ago. Senator Stewart writes:

While I was practicing law in San Francisco in 1864 I had an office in Montgomery Block, adjoining the office of Judge Botts, of Virginia, a brother of Gov. John Minor Botts. Judge Botts went to the polls one election day to exercise the right of franchise. The precinct in which he voted was about the toughest in town. When the judge attempted to deposit the ballot the bystanders took him off his feet, elevated him, and passed him from one to the other without letting him touch the ground for more than a block. During the performance they made his clothes look as though they had been picked from a rag bag. He came into my room in a most excited condition, frothing at the mouth, with his eyes flashing vengeance against the world.

"I've changed my politics!" he cried.

"What has happened, judge?"

"What has happened?" he roared. "I've changed my politics!"

"What politics have you adopted?"

"I am in favor of an absolute monarchy, limited only by right of assassination."

"Well," said I, "do you think that better than our form of government?"

"There is a possibility of vengeance in that kind of a government for wrongs and insults inflicted," he answered. "By the eternal, there is none here! I have been bamboozled and hurled about for the last half hour, and God knows how I can ever get even with those wretches!"

Or can we be sufficiently grateful to Senator Stewart for the picture he has given us of Abraham Lincoln. He says:

The morning after I took my seat in the Senate I called upon President Lincoln at the White House. He received me in the most friendly manner, taking me by both hands, and saying:

"I'm glad to see you here. We need as many loyal States as we can get, and, in addition to that, the gold and silver in the region you represent has made it possible for the government to maintain sufficient credit to continue this terrible war for the Union. I have observed such manifestations of the patriotism of your people as assure me that the government can rely on your State for such support as is in your power."

Mr. Lincoln's countenance when in repose was the saddest I ever saw, but when he smiled to encourage a visitor, or desired to show him the impossibility of granting his request, his face would overflow with genial good humor; and he would usually tell an anecdote which would illustrate the situation and invariably induce his visitor to agree with him, whether he granted or refused the request.

And then, some years afterward, when he had been admitted to the privilege of friendship with Mr. Lincoln, he tells about coming into Washington on the fatal day that saw Lincoln's assassination.

The train arrived in Washington at an early hour, and we went to Willard's Hotel, where we took a nap. But being tired, we overslept ourselves. When breakfast was over it was too late to call on President Lincoln, who received visitors at 10 o'clock in the morning and at 7 o'clock at night. We waited until evening and called to see him. An usher took our cards. He returned in about five minutes with a card from Mr. Lincoln on which was written:

"I am engaged to go to the theater with Mrs. Lincoln. It is the kind of an engagement I never break. Come with your friend to-morrow at 10, and I shall be glad to see you. A. LINCOLN."

Those were the last words Abraham Lincoln ever wrote. I did not preserve the card, not considering it of any importance, for I had received many such from the President at various times. As I walked down stairs with Judge Searles on our way out, I dropped the President's note on the floor. At the front entrance Mr. Lincoln was placing his wife in a carriage. I was intending to pass without interrupting them, but he saw us and extended his hand cordially. I introduced Judge Searles to him. He repeated that he would be glad to see us in the morning, bade us good-night, entered the carriage, and drove away. It was the last time I saw him alive.

Not Afraid to Tell the Truth.

With the politics of that time, that to many of us are just a history, Senator Stewart was well acquainted, for he was a part and parcel of the times. And one fine thing about his reminiscences is that in them he is not afraid to set down plain truths, let them hurt who they will. Stereotyped history makes light of the story of how Vice President Johnson was notified that he had succeeded to the Presidency of this nation. Senator Stewart was one of those who went to notify him, and who found him in a disgraceful condition. Thus he narrates the incident:

After some little delay Johnson opened the door and we entered. The Vice President was in his bare feet, and only partially dressed, as though he had hurriedly drawn on a pair of trousers and a shirt. He was occupying two little rooms about ten feet square, and we entered one of them, a sitting-room, while he finished his toilet in the other.

In a few minutes Johnson came in, putting on a very rumpled coat, and presenting the appearance of a drunken man. He was dirty, shabby, and his hair was matted, as though with mud from the gutter, while he blinked at us through squinting eyes, and lurched around unsteadily. He had been on a "bender" for a month. As he came into the room we were all standing. Johnson felt for a chair and sat down. Chief Justice Chase said very solemnly:

"The President has been assassinated. He died this morning. I have come to administer the oath of office to you."

Johnson seemed dazed at first. Then he jumped up, thrust his right arm up as far as he could reach, and said in a thick, gruff, hoarse voice:

"I'm ready."

The Chief Justice administered the oath. Johnson—President Johnson—went back to his bedroom, and we retired.

Interesting, too, as showing something of the social manners of Washington at the period of Senator Stewart's early career are some of his pen pictures of men at the nation's Capitol. For instance, he tells us:

James A. McDougall, who was Senator from California at the time I entered that body, was a remarkable character. He had practiced law at the bar in Illinois with Mr. Lincoln, and they were warm personal friends. He was a man of great learning, not alone in his profession, being familiar with history and the classics; but unfortunately, after he went to the Senate he fell a victim to alcoholic drink and said and did many queer things.

One night he fell into a sewer which was being excavated in front of Seward's house. A policeman saw him fall in and asked him who he was.

"Why, get me out," said McDougall. "I am Seward."

Not Friendly to Cleveland.

Nor does the author of this book hesitate to let his personal likes and dislikes be known; and even if he does not agree with Mr. Grover Cleveland's policies, it is amusing to find him saying of President U. S. Grant:

Both of us were great smokers. The habit cost him his life; I abandoned it the night the people elected Grover Cleveland President of the United States. I did not want to increase the revenues during his administration by paying duty on cigars.

Many of the people whom he has known Senator Stewart has the gift of setting before his readers in a sentence or two. As thus:

Benjamin Harrison was a unique character. He was gifted beyond comparison with a capacity to be disagreeable. He never either refused or granted a favor during the time he acted as President that he did not give offense. He was so impartial in the distribution of his disagreeableness that when a Senator entered the cloakroom of the Senate his associates could tell by his excited and disgusted manner if he had visited the White House that day.

And writing of folks nearer home we find him saying:

My wife is a strong character, endowed with the rare gift of common sense, and although she is unaccustomed to Western life, she adapts herself to the situation with readiness and ease, and makes my home more delightful than it would be in any other part of the world. We are not compelled to look abroad for excitement or entertainment. New developments and new discoveries are more agreeable than the vanities of society and the passing shows of large cities.

But there is no space to recount a tithe of the good things in this interesting book. But here the reader may learn how Senator Stewart defeated the Force bill; how he wrote the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution, and how Grant was interested in it. Here you may learn how Charles Sumner was dismissed in disgrace from the chairmanship of an impotent Senate committee, and multitudinous other details of the political history of Senator Stewart's time. His pages teem with the names of famous men, men with whom he has been intimately associated—Hannibal Hamlin, Buckalew, Cowan, Foote, Reverdy Johnson, John P. Hale, John Sherman, Benjamin F. Wade, William P. Fessenden, Andrew Johnson, Chase, Grant, Sumner, Greeley, Farragut, Sheridan, and a host of others. In all, this is probably the most interesting volume of reminiscences that has been issued in many years. It is published by the Neale Company, of Washington, and is handled in this city by W. H. Lowdermilk.

APARTMENT HOUSES IN U STREET.

BUILT BY FRANKLIN T. SANNER. SOLD BY MOORE & HILL.

APARTMENT HOUSES SOLD

Melwood and Vernon Change Hands at Sixty Thousand Dollars.

Built by Franklin T. Sanner and Purchased by Washington Parties for Investment.

Moore & Hill report an encouraging outlook for the real estate business for this season of the year. Among the larger sales made by this firm recently is that of the Melwood and Vernon apartment houses, the picture of which is shown in another column.

These two buildings were erected by Franklin T. Sanner about a year ago. They contain twelve apartments of five and six rooms and bath, and are located on the south side of U, near Eighteenth street. The income on these buildings amounts to about $5,500 annually, and the price realized in the sale was $60,000.

One of the buildings was sold to Mrs. Elizabeth Danenhower, and the other to a Washington man. Both properties will be held for investment, and will not again be placed on the market for sale. This transaction completes the sale of four apartment buildings on this square recently made by Moore & Hill. Not long since they disposed of the corner apartment known as the Geneva, a four-story building, to Mrs. Amarilla Lambert. The Cheltenham, the Vernon, and the Melwood were disposed of to local investors. The three latter buildings were erected by Mr. Sanner, and the Geneva by Mr. John L. Warren. The total value of the four buildings is over $125,000.

The same firm has experienced considerable activity in actual inquiries made by prospective purchasers and by actual sales consummated in the neighborhood around the Northern Liberty Market. They also have a large number of inquiries from business men, who believe that the Center Market is soon to be removed from its location on government property to the section near Seventh and K streets northwest.

This belief is borne out by the demand for property in that section and the inevitable purchase by the government of the property for the extension of the mall. Among the sales in this section made by this firm are 423, 425, 457, and 459 New York avenue, the total price of this property being about $20,000.

The firm also reports the sale of 1004 Twenty-sixth street northwest, for $4,000, and the two three-story residences at the southwest corner of Twenty-fourth street and Pennsylvania avenue, for about $12,000.

Church Buys Twelfth Street Lot.

The F. H. Smith Company has sold to the vestry of the Pro-Cathedral Church congregation two lots on the east side of Twelfth street, just above Massachusetts avenue northwest, for $9,500. The lots have been purchased for the erection of a parish house.

Quincy Street House Sold.

Moore & Hill have sold for Mrs. Mary I. Haas premises 144 Quincy street northwest. The house is of colonial design, with a front porch the width of the house. The lot is 20 by 95 feet. The house is one of a row of twenty-six built last year by Harry Wardman.

Buys Out Trunk Plant.

N. B. Handy, of Petersburg, Va., has purchased the plant of the American Trunk Company, and will probably resume operations.

THINKS WELL OF CONCRETE

Writer Defends Its Use Even in Beautiful Buildings.

Conditions Described Under Which It Is Available for Purposes of Construction.

A writer in the current number of the Municipal Engineering Magazine takes strong ground against the views of many architects relative to the use of concrete block in fine buildings. He says:

"Concrete has forced its way into building construction by way of the practical builder by virtue of its economy and strength, and has reached its height through the technical ability of the engineers who have recognized its value as a building material. Until the last two years, it has received only sporadic recognition from architects for its value as a medium through which to express ideas of beauty of structures, as well as utility and economy. This is natural, and can scarcely subject the architects to censure, although there has been consequent delay in the development of the new building material, and there are many atrocities which have been perpetrated by builders and by engineers who lacked the artistic sense and training which are essential for a good architect.

"Imitation of styles of architecture suited to other materials is not advised, except so far as the motive and effects approximate those peculiar to concrete. Some architects condemn the concrete block as a base imitation of stone, and therefore not aceptable for an architectural composition. The writer thinks they are incorrect in their position on this matter. A rocked-faced concrete block is a bare-faced imitation of a natural product, which cannot be successfully imitated, and is properly condemned, but there are facts about concrete construction which justify, and, in fact, may demand, the use of concrete in block form, and one of the basic principles laid down by these gentlemen is that a building which is successful architecturally must tell the truth.

"The truth about concrete is that in large surfaces cracks are probable on account of expansion and contraction from changes in temperature. If these cracks are not localized by joints, they will give trouble by appearing where they will be unsightly. The builders of small buildings may not be able to provide the necessary materials for producing monolithic concrete. It may be necessary to make up the concrete at one place and put it into a structure at another. Conditions of economy and expediency, and often of necessity, therefore, require block construction. In many cases, therefore, blocks frankly admitting their concrete structure are, by the principles governing these gentlemen, proper architectural material and must be accepted as such.

"Because blocks bad in design and poor in quality are on the market is no reason for condemning good blocks standing on their own merits as an architectural medium. There is apparently a place for the concrete block in both large and small buildings. Is a concrete block veneer for a re-enforced concrete wall any less true than a stone veneer? At least during the period intervening before a true concrete architecture appears there is a place for the concrete block as well as for brick and stone in combination with concrete, and not always as a matter of finish to imitate something else."

SALES BY BOSS & PHELPS.

Several Residences Find Market Through Fourteenth Street Firm.

Boss & Phelps have sold the residence adjoining the northeast corner of Sixteenth and Monroe streets northwest for Charles W. King, jr. It is heated by hot water and finished in oak throughout. The purchaser will occupy the house as a residence.

This firm has also sold the residence at 1029 Lamont street northwest for $6,500 to Mrs. Sue Cochran, who will occupy it as her residence. The house contains ten rooms, heated by hot water. The lot is 17x150 to an alley. The property was owned by William Brown.

William F. Adams has purchased the residence at 905 S street northwest. It is a three-story structure of pressed brick, with brown-stone trimmings, and contains ten rooms, heated by a furnace. The house is valued at $7,500. Mr. Adams will use the house as his residence.

Boss & Phelps have sold the new residence at 3555 Tenth street northwest, to Joseph R. Fague, who will occupy it as a residence. This is the tenth house recently sold of a row just completed by Harry Wardman.

They have also sold premises 1208 and 1210 Twenty-fourth street northwest. Each house contains six rooms, with a frontage of thirty-six feet, by a depth of eight feet to an alley. The houses were owned by Catherine McAvoy. The purchaser, Robert Cook, will hold the properties as an investment.

Lynchburg Company Plans Plant.

The Norfolk and Western Manufacturing Company, of Lynchburg, Va., Watkins L. Moorman, owner, will erect a five-and-one-half-story building, 100 by 40 feet, to cost $10,000. The cost of machinery will be $6,000. The company manufactures overalls, and the daily capacity of the new plant will be seventy-five dozen pairs.

IRELAND AND SNAKES

Soil from Emerald Isle Taken to New South Wales.

FAILS TO DRIVE OUT REPTILES

Scientific Explanation of St. Patrick's Miracle Never Been Given. Charmed Circle Made by Irish Earth, According to Mrs. Myers, Contributor to Current Literature.

A London newspaper, probably at a loss for a subject of general interest, published a report that an Irish resident in New South Wales, whose farm was infested by venomous snakes, had "telegraphed" to Ireland for a consignment of the soil of the Emerald Isle to be sent him, so that he might have it spread about the vicinity of his dwelling. His faith in the land once blessed by the presence of St. Patrick led him to believe that Irish soil would be a protection against snakes even in Australia.

This report was no doubt based on an old but true story of the importation of a shipload of Irish soil into New South Wales. Some time before the transportation of criminals ceased—that is, about 1836—the well-known Wentworth family built a stone mansion on the south shore of Sydney Harbor, near the Heads, and named it Vancluse. But after a year's occupation of their new home the family became so terrified at the number of deadly black and brown snakes which infested the beautiful grounds, and often got into the house itself, that serious thoughts were entertained of abandoning the mansion.

The assigned servants went about their household duties in terror, and at night every door and window was carefully closed. But in some mysterious way the reptiles still found an entry. Then it was proposed that the whole lower course of the walls should be sheathed with glass to prevent the snakes from ascending. This idea, if carried out, must have failed; a network of closely-woven barbed wire would have been more to the purpose. Then came the happy inspiration to have soil brought from Ireland, and to form a complete inclosing ridge around the entire estate. The scheme was duly carried out, and two cargoes of the precious soil were brought to Australia, each in a convict transport.

Still Believed in Irish Soil.

But it soon became apparent that St. Patrick's miracle had been performed only for the benefit of those patriotic Irishmen and women who remained in their native land. For, alas! the snakes came crawling about the Wentworth mansion as usual. Nevertheless many of the emancipated Irish convicts who were living in the vicinity firmly believed in the virtues of the earth from the "Ould Sod," and begged for some of it to protect their own humble homes. And Mrs. Leo Myers, a well-known contributor to current English literature, whose grandfather was an Australian and had a large estate near Vancluse, says that her mother well remembered that when she was a child she was always taken by her Irish nurse to play in an especial part of the garden, which was made safe from serpents by a circle of ground about fifty yards in circumference, inclosed by a ridge a few inches high of the soil imported from Ireland by the Wentworths.

An exact scientific explanation of St. Patrick's miracle has never yet been given to the world. Though snakes of the venomous species are most numerous in tropical countries, there is nothing in either the climate or soil of Ireland to prevent the reptiles from living and breeding on the island. The winters of Central and Northern New England are very severe, and yet the deadly crotalus—the dreaded rattlesnake—makes its home among the hills of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.

Every reader of Oliver Wendell Holmes' weird romance, "Elsie Venner," will remember the school-teacher's encounter with a crotalus on the mountainside: "The dreadful sound that nothing which breathes, be it man or brute, can hear unmoved—the long, loud, stinging whirr" of the snake's many-jointed rattle. That sound is never heard in Ireland, nor is the "glitter of two diamond eyes, small, sharp, cold," ever seen there. Fortunate Ireland!

Mrs. Goode Buys K Street House.

Willige, Gibbs & Daniel have sold to Mrs. Sarah F. J. Goode the new colonial brick dwelling at 2612 K street northwest, recently erected by Edward M. Dulin, the builder. The house is on the south side of K street, between Twenty-sixth and Twenty-seventh streets northwest. It has six large rooms, tiled bath, furnace heat, and a good-sized yard. The house has a frontage of seventeen feet. It is understood that $3,650 was paid for the property, which will be held as an investment.